CORRESPONDENCE, LOVE LETTERS & ADVICE

Beverly Hills, 90210

THANK YOU TO JAY MARTEL FOR writing a clever and original article that shows actors of *90210* as mature adults, not as sex objects ("Scenes From the Cast Struggle in Beverly Hills," RS 624). Yes, Perry and Priestly are gorgeous, but there's more to them – intelligence. And hooray to Shannen Doherty. There's a woman who speaks her mind.

LARA JACKSON
Palatine, Illinois

BEVERLY HILLS, 90210' IS THE KIND of fictional fluff that despite its need to include weighty subjects, should never take itself too seriously. But for its soap-opera quality and pure entertainment value, it's brain candy, and I never miss an episode.

LYN BARRIS
Rockaway, New Jersey

I WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE IMPRESSED IF the cover had shown the cast of *The Beverly Hillbillies*.

MARK A. CHERICO
San Diego, California

LIKE, PASS ME A SPOON, OKAY? I'M, like, gonna gag myself. By glorifying these boneheads on your cover, you have publicly announced your approval of a Valley-girl revival of the Nineties.

SARA JEFFRIES
Stockbridge, Michigan

WHAT A PERFECT ENGAGEMENT gift: a three-, excuse me, a six-and-a-half-carat diamond ring for a carrot-brain, no-talent vegetable. Now can we hear from some of the other major food groups?

TODD ALAN PREPSKY
Northridge, California

Raising Arizona

WOULD DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING Jr. advocate such open displays of hatred and violence as those depicted in "By the Time I Get to Arizona" (Random Notes, RS 624)? Shame on you, Mr. Flav. Pay your child support.

ROGER MCINTYRE
Bastrop, Louisiana

Stayin' Alive

BIG DEAL, NIRVANA SMASHED THEIR equipment (Performance, RS 624). What a waste. The Chili Peppers kicked ass. Let's see where Nirvana is five years down the road, if they last that long.

SAINT JAMES PELL
Mill Valley, California

IT'S A SHAME THAT GINA ARNOLD didn't feel she could comment on the incredible talent she was supposed to be reviewing without knocking the Grateful Dead. It's not a contest; it's music.

ALLISON PEAVY
KIMBERLY MOORE
Athens, Georgia

The Name Game

I THINK YOU SHOULD CHANGE THE name of your magazine to *The Guns n' Roses/Nirvana Update*. I can barely turn a page without reading about how great they are. But then again, Nirvana does have one whole hit album to its credit, and Axl does have the ever-so-sweet voice of an aging grandmother, and that's what's really important.

NIEL LAUDATI
Las Vegas, Nevada

Oliver's Twist

SINCE READING YOUR REVIEW OF 'JFK' (RS 622), I would like to respond to your questions as to the "facts" of my film. Here are a few points to consider:

• Although an NBC program accused Garrison of bribing witnesses, the witnesses subsequently signed affidavits saying that no one on Garrison's staff made any such offer. As for the NBC program, the FCC found it so biased that they immediately granted Garrison a half-hour of network time for a reply.

• Garrison did deliver the final argument. The text appeared in local newspapers, the court transcripts and in James Kirkwood's *American Grotesque*. If you check that text, you'll find it's very close to what you see in the film. (The remaining twenty percent of Costner's speech comes from Garrison's reply to NBC and from a *Playboy* interview with Garrison.)

• The "gratuitous drag orgy" has basis in fact, too. I included it because it was necessary to show how Shaw and Ferrie knew each other. Shaw was not exactly in the closet – at one time he owned a gay club in the French Quarter. He walked through his club with a whip, painted himself gold for Mardi Gras and came to the attention of Hoover's FBI in 1954 for being "given to sadism and masochism in his homosexual activities." Ferrie's exploits – numerous morals charges, an abortive attempt at adopting a teenage boy – were well documented. In 1967, a right-wing Shreveport newsletter published two photos of Shaw and Ferrie at a party. In one, they posed with two younger men; the other featured the same men in drag. Unfortunately, the photos did not come to Garrison's attention until after the trial, but they remain undisputed proof of the Ferrie-Shaw association.

I think what's happened here is you've trusted other journalists for your "facts." In accusing me of a "dishonest search for the truth," you have misrepresented some key points in the film.

OLIVER STONE
Santa Monica, California

PETER TRAVERS *responds:* I guess there's no pleasing Oliver Stone except by confessing my role as a media conspirator in the coverup of the JFK assassination. Sorry, I can't oblige. For starters, I never accused Garrison of bribing witnesses. My point was that flaws in Garrison's character were widely reported and that Stone glossed them over in his zeal to provide audiences with a DA hero only a tad less beatific than the archangel Gabriel.

Though Garrison did indeed have the last word at the Shaw trial, few would call it a final argument. In Stone's reference of choice, *American Grotesque*, author James Kirkwood called it a "valedictory address." In fact, it was Assistant DA James Alcock who asked the jury to bring in the guilty verdict and another assistant DA, Alvin Oser, who demolished the Warren Commission's "magic bullet" theory. Though the movie puts Costner's Garrison at the center of the trial action, official records indicate that the DA was seldom present in court.

I persist in finding Stone's lurid staging of the drag scene gratuitous. Is Stone suggesting that it's merely a short step from being a gay man in drag to being a conspirator to kill a president? His breathless descriptions of whips, gold paint and S&M are scarily homophobic.

Stone's *JFK* remains lively speculation. While the Warren Report tries to sedate us, *JFK* tries to stir us up. But I don't think I'm misrepresenting the film when I say it's a compromised work. Would it have hurt the film if Stone presented Garrison as a flawed human being who happened on some startling evidence? Hardly. Would it have hurt the film's box-office take? Ah, there's the rub. Stone's view of Garrison as a lone warrior is as suspect as the Warren Commission's view of Oswald as a lone gunman. Where Garrison is concerned, Stone is still selling a bill of goods.

I'm still not buying.

A credit was omitted from 'Speed Metals,' in RS 624. The U.S. Olympic skiers were photographed on location at Vail and Beaver Creek resorts; lodging was provided courtesy of Gasthof Gramshammer and the Highlands Lodge.

Address your correspondence to the Letters Editor, ROLLING STONE, 1290 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10104, or fax it to 212-767-8214. Include your address and telephone number.

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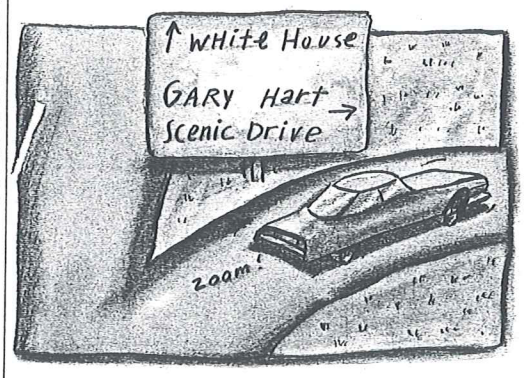
To order back issues of ROLLING STONE, send $10 and issue number to Back Issues, P.O. Box 40, Vernon, NJ 07462.

ROLLING STONE (ISSN 0035-791X) is published biweekly – except in July and at year's end, when two issues are combined and published as double issues – by Straight Arrow Publishers Inc., 1290 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10104. *The entire contents of ROLLING STONE are copyright © 1992 by Straight Arrow Publishers Inc. and may not be reproduced in any manner, either in whole or in part, without written permission from the publisher. All rights are reserved. The publisher does not assume responsibility for any unsolicited materials and will return only those accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.* *Canadian Goods and Service Tax Registration no. R125001193. The subscription price is $25.95 for one year and $48.95 for two years. The Canadian subscription price is $41.00 for one year, including GST. Second-class postage paid at New York, New York, and additional mailing offices. In Canada, entered as Windsor, Ontario. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to ROLLING STONE, P.O. Box 53529, Boulder, CO 80322-3529.*

THE CAMPAIGN By James T. Pendergrast



Clinton Takes A Side Trip